

Ephesians. The Identity of the Church that Overcomes

Part 24: Our Identity and Hope as the People of God

Houses of Light Church • March 30, 2025 • Pastor Netz Gomez & Ilse Marquez

Focus: Ephesians 2:12-13

“remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” Ephesians 2:12-13

Review:

What do you remember from what we talked about last week?

- The biggest point was: God removed the great wall of hostility between nations, starting with the wall there was between Jews and gentiles.
- The biggest thing we learn here is this: God didn't cast His first people aside or change His mind, but He made a way to expand the blessings and promises over them to include the whole world. Today we are going to unpack just how He went about doing that.

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

- What does this mean?
 - There were a people who seemed to be closer to God just based on where they were born, considered God's chosen people, but in Christ we see the fullness of God's heart towards humanity: The people of Israel were only the beginning.
 - Chosen because Abraham had faith.
 - Chosen because they were insignificant and stubborn, yet God made a promise to their forefathers and He is not a man that He should lie.
 - They could be closer because they received His law, teaching, and had the opportunity to get to know His character while the rest of the nations didn't receive that kind of access, and yet they did not always choose God in return.
 - So what does it really take to be God's people? — is it about where you're born, who your parents are, or your level of biblical education?
 - In Romans, Paul unpacks just what is happening with the people of God: *“For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel. and not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but *“Through Isaac shall your offspring be named.”* This means that **it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring.**” Romans 9:3-8*
 - Here we see that Abraham's descendants are not necessarily blood-related to Him, but actually they are grafted into his bloodline by having faith in God. We can also find this in **Galatians 6:7-9** - *“Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’ So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”*
 - God promised every nation would be blessed through Abraham — this is how: through faith in Jesus!
 - Paul explains this reality in Romans 11: *“Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? If the dough offered as*

*firstfruits is holy, so is the whole lump, and if the root is holy, so are the branches. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, although a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you. Then you will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand fast through faith. So do not become proud, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you." **Romans 11:13-21** (I encourage you to read Romans to see the full picture of what God is doing with His people.)*

- For this reason, we don't just discard Israel or the promises the Lord gave them. We also don't just adopt the promises of the Old Testament as if they were written to us. This is crucial to remember when we are reading the Bible: **The Bible was not written to us, it was written for us.** To fully understand what is being said in the Bible we have to remember that we are joining someone else's story, we don't know their language or their customs, so it's okay that it doesn't all make sense. This is not to say we need to adopt the Jewish religion or follow Old Testament law, but rather to understand that none of us are **entitled** to this story or salvation. They were chosen by the grace of God, and we were grafted in by that same grace.

How do we receive the promises of the Old Testament?

- Now, in Christ, we are no longer foreigners of the promise — let's look at the covenants God made with His people:
 1. Covenant with Abraham: Genesis 12:3 — "I will bless those who bless you, through you the nations of the earth will be blessed."
 1. Through faith in Christ, we enter the covenant God made with Him.
 2. Covenant with David: 2 Samuel 7:12-16 - "Your house and your kingdom will last forever before me; your throne will be established forever."
 1. This promise was made to David, king of Israel — Jesus would be the ultimate fulfillment of this as He came into the world through David's bloodline.
 1. Further details of this promise (it's all over the Old Testament, especially the prophets, as this promise formed the expectation in the nation that a Messiah would come):
 1. Isaiah 55: 1 & 3 — All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come and live! — The promise based on God's love towards David.
 2. Luke 1:31-33 — When the angel comes to Mary he describes Jesus in this way: He will be the high and lofty one, the Lord will give Him David's throne, and there will be no end to His kingdom!
 3. The new covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-33 — "I will write my law in your mind and heart. I will be your God and you will be my people."
 1. This would be fulfilled in Christ, as He even hinted to during the Lord's supper (Luke 22:20) — The new covenant is fulfilled under the blood!
 2. This is what Paul is talking about in Ephesians!

Under the Blood

The greatest factor to whether we are in the kingdom or not isn't our birthplace or nationality, but whether or not we are under the blood of Jesus. He is the one who qualifies us to receive His promises, He is the one who made a way for us to be part of this great story! God didn't cast anyone aside, but when the people He chose rejected Him, He used that opportunity to open the door to the rest of humanity. All of this was done to show His grace and His great intentionality — His love. Are we under the blood? Have we been counting on anything other than Jesus to qualify us before the Lord? Today is the day to yield to Him yet again!